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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000082

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 20, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 20, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Residents of Diyarbakir's Hasirli quarters expressed their outrage about yesterday's rape of a seven-year-old child (see 4/18-19 press summ) by marching along the streets shouting "Shoulder to shoulder against the gangs", "Arrest the brutes, penalize the perpetrators." Meanwhile, the health condition of the victim was reported as critical.

ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / SABAH: Diyarbakir Public Prosecutor Haki Celiker, after re-examining the case of the March 1994 deaths of thirty-eight persons in two Sirnak villages, sent the case back to Sirnak in October 2004, citing a lack of jurisdiction in the case. (Note: The Sirnak Prosecutor had sent the case to the Diyarbakir State Security Court after the incident, alleging that it had been perpetrated by the PKK. The families' lawyer urged last year that the case be reinvestigated.) In returning the case, the Diyarbakir Prosecutor reportedly sent a letter to the Sirnak Chief Public Prosecutor allegedly stating that no evidence had been found to support claims of PKK involvement in the case, and that according to statements, the villagers died after planes and helicopters had bombed the area. The Diyarbakir Prosecutor's recent letter also reportedly advised that the case must be investigated "effectively" to avoid putting Turkey in a difficult position at a probable future European Court of Human Rights case.

OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Approximately 6000 barrels of the total amount of oil that leaked from the Batman-Yumurtalik pipeline have been cleaned up. (Note: The total amount of the oil leak was unspecified in these reports.) An American specialist participated in the decontamination activities of the affected area. The Provincial Director for Forests and Environment announced that damage assessment studies would be conducted at the end of BOTAS' decontamination process.

ZAMAN / EKSPRES / EVRENSEL / BOLGE / HURRIYET / SABAH / YENI SAFAK: Guantanamo prisoner Salih Uyar has been released. Uyar was brought to Adana, after spending more than three years at Guantanamo. A military notice has reportedly been issued calling Uyar to render his compulsory military service.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: Adana Governor Cahit Kirac called for an investigation into media reports alleging that girls attending a primary school in Seyhan district of Adana had been deprived of the state's school transportation services. The Governor discussed the matter for forty-five minutes with the Deputy Provincial Education Director and the deputy governors.

EKSPRES: AKP Adana MP Abdullah Torun, Adana Mayor Aytac Durak, and Yuregir Mayor Omer Topcu, announced that the State Housing Administration would begin construction of 792 flats in Yuregir district.

EVRENSEL: Military operations are reportedly continuing in Silvan district of Diyarbakir. Separately, two thousand soldiers and village guards are reportedly readying for an operation in Narli Jandarma Command in Van.

EVRENSEL: The case of a lawsuit seeking the annulment of a 1998 Council of Ministers decision to build two dams on the Munzur river in Tunceli started today.

YENI SAFAK: Citizens of Adana are disturbed that a ditch dug during light-rail construction has been left neglected due to a lack of funds and has turned into a lake with fish in it. Recently, the level of water reportedly rose "dangerously".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): As Mersin emerges as a center for fuel-oil smuggling, the Investigation Commission of the Turkish Parliament has launched a probe into the matter. The (Turkish) state's losses from a variety of smuggling methods reportedly reached three billion dollars. Meanwhile, Hurriyet (Cukurova) reports the arrest in Mersin of five people as they were caught red-handed emptying the tank of

a fuel-oil-transporting truck to Iraq.

REID